

George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, December 30, 1794.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: I lay before you a report made to me by the Secretary of War respecting the frontiers of the United States. The disorders and the great expenses which incessantly arise upon the frontiers are of a nature and magnitude to excite the most serious considerations.

I feel a confidence that Congress will devise such constitutional and efficient measures as shall be equal to the great objects of preserving our treaties with the Indian tribes, and of affording an adequate protection to our frontiers.⁶⁴

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE

United States, January 2, 1795.

Gentlemen of the Senate: A spirit of discontent from

several causes arose in the early part of the present year among the Six Nations of Indians, and particularly on the ground of a projected settlement by Pennsylvania at Presqu'isle upon Lake Erie. The papers upon this point have already been laid before Congress. It was deemed proper on my part, to endeavour to tranquilize the Indians by pacific measures. Accordingly a time and place was appointed at which a free conference

Library of Congress

should be had upon all the causes of discontent. And an Agent was appointed with the Instructions of which No. 1 herewith transmitted is a copy.

A numerous assembly of Indians was held at Canandarqua in the State of New York, the proceedings whereof accompny this message marked No. 2.

The two treaties the one with the Six Nations, and the other with the Oneida, Tuscarora and Stockbridge Indians dwelling in the Country of the Oneidas, which have resulted from the mission of the Agent, are herewith laid before the Senate for their consideration and advice.⁶⁶ The original engagement of the United States to the Oneidas is also sent herewith.⁶⁷

66. The Senate ratified this treaty of Nov. 11, 1794, and the treaty with the Oneidas *et al.* on Jan. 9, 1795.

67. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, January 8, 1795.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: I lay before Congress copies of acts passed by the legislatures of the States

of Vermont, Massachusetts and New York, ratifying the amendment proposed by the Senate and House of Representatives at their last session, to the Constitution of the United States, respecting the judicial power thereof.⁷⁰

The Minister of the French republic having communicated to the Secretary of State certain proceedings of the Committee of public safety⁷¹ respecting weights and measures, I lay these also before Congress.

Library of Congress

The Letter from the Governor of the Western territory,⁷² copies of which are now transmitted, refers to a defect in the judicial system of that territory. deserving the attention of Congress.

The necessary absence of the Judge of the District of Pennsylvania upon business, connected with the late insurrection, is stated by him in a letter, of which I forward copies, to have produced certain interruptions in the judicial proceedings of that District, which cannot be removed without the interposition of Congress.⁷³

70. The Eleventh Amendment. It was ratified by Delaware, the twelfth State, Jan. 23, 1795.

71. Of France.

72. Gov. Arthur St. Clair, of the Northwestern Territory. His letter of Dec. 15, 1794, is printed in the *Territorial Papers of the United States* (C. E. Carter, editor), vol. 2, p. 499.

73. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, February 4, 1795.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the

House of Representatives: I lay before Congress for their consideration, a Letter from the Secretary of State⁹¹ upon the subject of a Loan, which is extremely interesting and urgent.⁹²

91. Randolph's letter of February 4, also recorded in the "Letter Book," states that the Secretary of the Treasury reports from an extract of a letter from our Commissioners at Amsterdam, conveys "the painful intelligence, that reliance cannot be had on the success of the measures heretofore taken for procuring the Loan there. Altho' all the

Library of Congress

necessary powers and instructions have been given for carrying into execution the principal object of that law [Act of March 20, 1794, authorizing a loan of one million dollars] I am apprehensive that the business will be stagnated unless the most prompt expedients should be adopted. Congress are the sole authority, which can remove the difficulties, and I therefore take the liberty of suggesting the propriety of laying the matter before them."

92. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, March 2, 1795.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: It appears from the information which I have lately received, that it may be probably necessary, to the more successful conduct of

our affairs on the coast of Barbary, that one Consul should reside in Morocco, another in Algiers, and a third in Tunis or Tripoli. As no appointment for these offices will be accepted, without some emoluments annexed; I submit to the consideration of Congress, whether it may not be adviseable to authorize a stipend to be allowed to two Consuls for that coast, in addition to the one already existing.¹⁰

10. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

United States, March 3, 1795.

Certain matters touching the public good, requiring that the Senate shall be convened on Monday the 8th. of June next; I have desired their attendance, as I do yours by these

Library of Congress

presents,11 at the Senate Chamber in Philadelphia on that day, then and there to receive and deliberate on such communications as shall be made to you on my part.10

11. The notifications to the individual Senators were also dated March 3 and varied from the above only in the phrase “I have desired their attendance,” which read “You are desired to attend at the Senate Chamber, Etc.” The notification to Senator Theodore Foster, of Rhode Island, in the writing of a clerk in the Department of State, but signed by the President, is in the Huntington Library.

10. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE

United States, June 8, 1795.

Gentlemen of the Senate: In pursuance of my nomination of John Jay, as Envoy Extraordinary to his britannic majesty, on the 16 day of April 1794, and of the advice and consent of the Senate thereto on the 19th, a negotiation was opened in London. On the 7 of March 1795, the treaty resulting therefrom, was delivered to the Secrey. of State. I now transmit to the Senate that treaty, and other documents connected with it. They will therefore in their wisdom decide, whether they will advise and consent that the said treaty be made between the United States and his britannic majesty.7

7. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE

United States, June 25, 1795.

Gentlemen of the Senate: It has been represented by our Minister plenipotentiary near the French Republic, that such of our commercial relations with France, as may require the support of the Und. States in *detail* , cannot be well executed without a Consul General.

Library of Congress

Of this I am satisfied; when I consider the extent of the mercantile claims now depending before the French Government; the necessity of bringing into the hands of one Agent the various applications to the several Committees of administration, residing at Paris; the attention which must be paid to the conduct of Consuls and Vice Consuls; and the nature of the services which are the peculiar objects of a ministers care, and leave no leisure for his intervention in business, to which Consular functions are competent. I therefore nominate Fulwar Skipwith, to be Consul General of the United States, in France....¹¹

11. The omitted portion contains other and minor nominations. Skipwith and the others were confirmed by the Senate, June 26.

To THE SENATE

United States, June 25, 1795.

Gentlemen of the Senate: Just at the close of the last session of Congress, I received from one of the Senators and one of the representatives of the State of Georgia, an application for a treaty to be held with the tribes or nations of Indians claiming the right of soil to certain lands lying beyond

the present temporary boundary line of that State, and which were described in an Act of the Legislature of Georgia passed on the 28th. of December last, which has already been laid before the Senate. This application, and the subsequent correspondence with the Governor of Georgia are herewith transmitted. The subject being very important, I thought proper to postpone a decision upon that application. The views I have since taken of the matter, with the information received of a more pacific disposition on the part of the Creeks, have induced me now, to accede to the request; but with this explicit declaration: That neither my assent, nor the treaty which may be made, shall be considered as affecting any question which may arise upon the supplementary act, passed by the Legislature of the State of Georgia on the 7th of January last, upon which enquiries have been instituted, in pursuance of a resolution of the Senate and House of

Library of Congress

Representatives; and that any cession or relinquishment of the Indian claims, shall be made in the general terms of the treaty of New York; which are contemplated as the form proper to be generally used on such occasions; and on the condition that one half of the expense of the supplies of provisions for the Indians assembled at the treaty, be borne by the State of Georgia.

Having concluded to hold the treaty

requested by that State, I was willing to embrace the opportunity it would present, of enquiring into the causes of the dissatisfaction of the Creeks which has been manifested, since the treaty of New York, by their numerous and distressing depredations on our southwestern frontiers. Their depredations on the Cumberland have been so frequent and so peculiarly destructive, as to lead me to think they must originate in some claim to the lands upon that river. But whatever may have been the cause, it is important to trace it to its sources, for independent of the destruction of lives and property, it occasions a very serious annual expense to the United States. The Commissioners for holding the proposed treaty will therefore be instructed to enquire into the causes of the hostilities to which I have referred, and to enter into such reasonable stipulations as will remove them and give permanent peace to those parts of the United States.

I now nominate Benjamin Hawkins, of North Carolina, George Clymer of Pennsylvania; and Andrew Pickens of South Carolina, to be Commissioners¹² to hold a treaty with the Creek nation of Indians, for the purposes herein before expressed.¹³

12. The Senate confirmed these nominations June 26.

13. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

SEVENTH ANNUAL ADDRESS

United States, December 8, 1795.

Library of Congress

Fellow-Citizens of the Senate, and House of Representatives:

61. A committee of Congress having informed the President (December 7) that a quorum of both Houses were ready to receive his communications, the President informed the joint committee that he would make his communication to Congress "in the Chamber of the House of Representatives tomorrow at 12 o'clock." On that occasion the President was attended by the Secretaries of the Treasury and War.

I trust I do not deceive myself, while I indulge the persuasion, that I have never met you at any period, when more than at present, the situation of our public affairs has afforded just cause for mutual congratulation; and for inviting you, to join with me, in profound gratitude to the Author of all good, for the numerous, and extraordinary blessings we enjoy.

The termination of the long, expensive and distressing war in which we have been engaged with certain Indians North west of the Ohio, is placed in the option of the United States, by a treaty, which the Commander of our Army has concluded, provisionally, with the hostile tribes in that Region.

In the adjustment of the terms, the satisfaction of the Indians was deemed an object worthy no less of the policy, than of the liberality of the United States, as the necessary basis of durable tranquility. This object, it is believed, has been fully attained. The articles agreed upon, will immediately be laid before the Senate, for their consideration.

The Creek and Cherokee Indians, who alone of the Southern tribes had annoyed our frontier, have lately confirmed their pre-existing treaties with us; and were giving evidence of a sincere disposition to carry them into effect, by the surrender of the prisoners and property they had taken: But we have to lament, that the fair prospect in this quarter, has been once more clouded by wanton murders, which some Citizens of Georgia are represented to have recently perpetrated on hunting parties of the Creeks; which have again subjected that frontier to disquietude and danger; which will be productive of further

Library of Congress

expense; and may occasion effusion of blood. Measures are pursuing to prevent, or mitigate, the usual consequences of such outrages; and with the hope of their succeeding, at least to avert general hostility.

A letter from the Emperor of Morocco, announces to me his recognition of our Treaty made with his father, the late Emperor; and, consequently the continuance, of peace with that Power. With peculiar satisfaction I add, that information has been received from an Agent, deputed on our part to Algiers, importing, that the terms of a Treaty with the Dey and Regency of that country, had been adjusted in such a manner, as to authorise the expectation of a speedy peace; and the restoration of our unfortunate fellow-citizens from a grievous captivity.

The latest advises from our Envoy at the Court of Madrid, give moreover, the pleasing information, that he had received assurances of a speedy, and satisfactory conclusion of his negotiation. While the event, depending upon unadjusted particulars, cannot be regarded as ascertained, it is agreeable to cherish the expectation of an issue, which securing amicably, very essential interests of the United States, will at the same time lay the foundation of lasting harmony with a power, whose friendship we have uniformly, and sincerely desired to cultivate.

Though not before officially disclosed to the House of Representatives, you, Gentlemen, are all apprized, that a Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation has been negotiated with Great Britain; and that the Senate have advised and consented to its ratification, upon a condition which excepts part of one article. Agreeably thereto, and to the best judgment I was able to form of the public interest, after full and mature deliberation, I have added my sanction. The result on the part of His Britannic Majesty, is unknown. When received, the subject will, without delay be placed before Congress.

This interesting summary of our affairs, with regard to the foreign powers, between whom and the United States controversies have subsisted, and with regard also to those of our

Library of Congress

Indian neighbours, with whom we have been in a state of enmity or misunderstanding, opens a wide field for consoling and gratifying reflections. If by prudence and moderation on every side, the extinguishment of all the causes of external discord, which have heretofore menaced our tranquillity, on terms compatible with our national rights and honor, shall be the happy result; how firm and how precious a foundation will have been laid for accelerating, maturing and establishing the prosperity of our country!

Contemplating the internal situation, as well as the external relations of the United States, we discover equal cause for contentment and satisfaction. While many of the nations of Europe, with their American Dependencies, have been involved in a contest unusually bloody, exhausting and calamitous; in which the evils of foreign war have been aggravated by domestic convulsion and insurrection; in which many of the arts most useful to society have been exposed to discouragement and decay; in which scarcity of subsistence has embittered other sufferings; while even the anticipations of a return of the blessings of peace and repose, are alloyed by the sense of heavy and accumulating burthens, which press upon all the departments of industry, and threaten to clog the future springs of Government: Our favored country, happy in a striking contrast, has enjoyed general tranquility; a tranquility the more satisfactory, because maintained at the expense of no duty. Faithful to ourselves, we have violated no obligation to others. Our Agriculture, Commerce and Manufactures, prosper beyond

former example; the molestations of our trade (to prevent a continuance of which, however, very pointed remonstrances have been made) being over-balanced by the aggregate benefits which it derives from a Neutral position. Our population advances with a celerity, which exceeding the most sanguine calculations, proportionally augments our strength and resources, and guarantees our future security. Every part of the union displays indications of rapid and various improvement, and with burthens so light as scarcely to be perceived; with resources fully adequate to our present exigencies; with Governments founded on genuine principles of rational liberty, and with mild and

Library of Congress

wholesome laws; is it too much to say, that our country exhibits a spectacle of national happiness never surpassed if ever before equalled?

Placed in a situation every way so auspicious, motives of commanding force impel us, with sincere acknowledgment to heaven, and pure love to our country, to unite our efforts to preserve, prolong, and improve, our immense advantages. To cooperate with you in this desirable work, is a fervent, and favorite wish of my heart.

It is a valuable ingredient in the general estimate of our welfare, that the part of our country, which was lately the scene of disorder and insurrections, now enjoys the blessings of quiet and order. The misled have abandoned their errors, and pay the respect to our Constitution and laws which is due from good citizens, to the public authorities of the society. These circumstances, have induced me to pardon, generally, the offenders here referred to; and to extend forgiveness to those who had been adjudged to capital punishment. For though I shall

always think it a sacred duty, to exercise with firmness and energy, the Constitutional powers with which I am vested, yet it appears to me no less consistent with the public good, than it is with my personal feelings, to mingle in the operations of government, every degree of moderation and tenderness, which the national justice, dignity and safety may permit.

Gentlemen: Among the objects which will claim your attention in the course of the session, a review of our Military establishment is not the least important. It is called [for] by the events which have changed, and may be expected still further to change, the relative situation of our frontiers. In this review, you will doubtless allow due weight to the considerations, that the questions between us, and certain foreign powers, are not yet finally adjusted; that the war in Europe is not yet terminated; and that our Western Posts, when recovered, will demand provision for garrisoning and securing them. A statement of our present military force will be laid before you by the department of war.

Library of Congress

With the review of our army establishment, is naturally connected that of the Militia. It will merit inquiry, what imperfections in the existing plan, further experience may have unfolded. The subject is of so much moment, in my estimation, as to excite a constant solicitude that the consideration of it may be renewed, till the greatest attainable perfection shall be accomplished. Time is wearing away some advantages for forwarding the object, while none better deserves the persevering attention of the public councils.

While we indulge the satisfaction, which the actual condition of our Western borders so well authorizes, it is necessary that we should not lose sight of an important truth, which continually receives new confirmations, namely, that the provisions heretofore made with a view to the protection of the Indians, from the violences of the lawless part of our frontier inhabitants are insufficient. It is demonstrated that these violences can now be perpetrated with impunity. And it can need no argument to prove, that unless the murdering of Indians can be restrained, by bringing the murderers to condign punishment, all the exertions of the government to prevent retaliations, by the Indians, will prove fruitless; and all our present agreeable prospects illusory. The frequent destruction of innocent women and children, who are chiefly the victims of retaliation, must continue to shock humanity; and an enormous expence to drain the Treasury of the Union.

To enforce upon the Indians the observance of Justice, it is indispensable that there shall be competent means of rendering justice to them. If these means can be devised by the wisdom of Congress; and especially if there can be added an adequate provision for supplying the necessities of the Indians on reasonable terms, (a measure the mention of which I the more readily repeat, as in all the conferences with them they urge it with solicitude) I should not hesitate to entertain a strong hope, of rendering our tranquility permanent. I add with pleasure, that the probability even of their civilization is not diminished, by the experiments which have been thus far made under the auspices of Government.

Library of Congress

The accomplishment of this work, if practicable, will reflect undecayed lustre on our national character, and administer the most grateful consolations that virtuous minds can know.

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives: The state of our revenue with the sums which have been borrowed and reimbursed, pursuant to different acts of Congress, will be submitted from the proper Department; together with an estimate of the appropriations necessary to be made for the service of the ensuing year.

Whether measures may not be advisable to reinforce the provision for the redemption of the public debt, will naturally engage your examination. Congress have demonstrated their sense to be, and it were superfluous to repeat mine, that whatsoever will tend to accelerate the honorable extinction of our Public Debt, accords as much with the true interest of our country, as with the general sense of our Constituents.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and House of Representatives: The Statements, which will be laid before you relative to the Mint, will shew the situation of that institution; and the necessity of some further Legislative provisions for carrying the business of it more completely into effect; and for checking abuses which appear to be arising in particular quarters.

The progress in providing materials for the Frigates, and in building them; the state of the fortifications of our harbours; the measures which have been pursued for obtaining proper sites for Arsenals, and for replenishing our Magazines with military stores; and the steps which have been taken towards the execution of the law for opening a trade with the Indians; will likewise be presented for the information of Congress.

Temperate discussion of the important subjects, which may arise in the course of the Session, and mutual forbearance where there is a difference of opinion, are too

Library of Congress

obvious, and necessary for the peace happiness and welfare of our country, to need any recommendation of mine.⁶²

62. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On December 12, at noon, the Senate waited upon the President at his house, when the Vice President delivered him an address in reply to his, to which the President made a formal rejoinder.

On December 17, at noon, the House of Representatives waited on the President at his house, when the Speaker delivered him an address, in reply to the President's address to Congress, to which the President made a formal rejoinder.

These addresses and rejoinders are entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, January 4, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and House of Representatives: A letter from the Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Republic, received on the 22d. of the last month, covered an address, dated the 21st of October 1794, from the Committee of public Safety, to the Representatives of the United States in Congress;⁹² and also informed me, that he was instructed by the Committee, to present to the United States, the Colours of France. I thereupon proposed to receive them last Friday, the first day of the New Year, a day of general joy and congratulation. On that day, the Minister of the French Republic delivered the Colours, with an address, to which I returned an answer. By the latter, the House will see, that I have informed the Minister, that the Colours will be deposited with the Archives of the United States. But it seemed to me proper, previously to exhibit to the two Houses of Congress, these evidences of the continued friendship of the French Republic, together

Library of Congress

with the sentiments expressed by me on the occasion, in behalf of the United States. They are herewith communicated.⁹³

92. This address is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

REPLY TO THE FRENCH MINISTER⁸⁵

United States, January 1, 1796.

Born, Sir, in a land of liberty; having early learned its value; having engaged in a perilous conflict to defend it; having, in a word, devoted the best years of my life to secure its permanent establishment in my own country; my anxious recollections, my sympathetic feelings, and my best wishes are irresistibly excited, whensoever, in any country, I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of Freedom. But above all, the events of the French Revolution have produced the deepest solicitude, as well as the highest admiration. To call your nation brave, were

85. See Washington's letter to Congress, Jan. 4, 1796, *post*.

to pronounce but common praise. Wonderful people! Ages to come will read with astonishment the history of your brilliant exploits! I rejoice, that the period of your toils and of your immense sacrifices, is approaching. I rejoice that the interesting revolutionary movements of so many years have issued in the formation of a constitution designed to give permanency to the great object for which you have contended. I rejoice that liberty, which you have so long embraced with enthusiasm, liberty, of which you have been the invincible defenders, now finds an asylum in the bosom of a regularly organized government; a government, which, being formed to secure the happiness of the French people, corresponds with the ardent wishes of my heart, while it gratifies the pride of every

Library of Congress

citizen of the United States, by its resemblance to their own. On these glorious events, accept, Sir, my sincere congratulations.

In delivering to you these sentiments, I express not my own feelings only, but those of my fellow citizens, in relation to the commencement, the progress, and the issue of the French revolution: and they will cordially join with me in purest wishes to the Supreme Being, that the citizens of our sister republic, our magnanimous allies, may soon enjoy in peace, that liberty which they have purchased at so great a price, and all the happiness which liberty can bestow.

I receive Sir, with lively sensibility, the symbol of the triumphs and of the enfranchisement of your nation, the colours of France, which you have now presented to the United States. The transaction will be announced to Congress; and the colours will

be deposited with the archives of the United States,⁸⁶ which are at once the evidences and the memorials of their freedom and independence. May these be perpetual! and may the friendship of the two republics be commensurate with their existence.⁸⁷

86. The colors were duly deposited in the Department of State, which was then the depository of the archives; but their present whereabouts are unknown.

87. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. Adet's presentation speech is also entered in the "Letter Book,"

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, January 8, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives: I transmit to you a memorial of the Commissioners⁹⁵ appointed by virtue of an Act entitled "An Act for establishing the

Library of Congress

Temporary and permanent Seat of the Government of the United States” on the subject of the public Buildings under their direction.

Since locating a District for the permanent Seat of the Government of the United States as heretofore announced to both Houses of Congress I have accepted the grants of money and of land stated in the Memorial of the Commissioners. I have directed the buildings therein mentioned to be commenced on plans which I deemed consistent with the liberality of the Grants and proper for the purposes intended.

I have not been inattentive to this important business, intrusted by the Legislature to my care. I have received the resources placed in my hands and observed the manner in which they have been applied; the progress is pretty fully detailed in the memorial from the Commissioners, and one of them attends to give further information if required.

In a case new and arduous like the present difficulties might naturally be expected: some

95. Entered in full in the “Letter Book” immediately following this message.

have occurred; but they are in a great degree surmounted, and I have no doubt if the remaining resources are properly cherished, so as to prevent the loss of property by hasty and numerous sales, that all the buildings required for the accommodation of the Government of the United States may be compleated in season, without aid from the Federal Treasury. The subject is therefore recommended to the consideration of Congress, and the result will determine the measures which I shall cause to be pursued with respect to the property remaining unsold.⁹⁶

96. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, January 29, 1796.

Library of Congress

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: In pursuance of the Authority vested in the President of the United States by an Act of Congress passed the third of March last, to reduce the weight of the copper coin of the United States, whenever he should think it for the benefit of the United States, provided that the reduction should not exceed two penny weights in each cent, and in the like proportion in a half cent; I have caused the same to be reduced, since the twenty seventh of last December, to wit, one penny weight and sixteen grains in each cent, and in the like proportion in a half cent, and I have given notice thereof by Proclamation.⁸

By the letter of the Judges of the Circuit Court of the United States held at Boston in June last, and the inclosed application of the under Keeper of the Jail at that place, of which copies are herewith transmitted, Congress will perceive the necessity of making a suitable provision for the maintenance of Prisoners committed to the Jails of the several States under the authority of the United States.⁹

8. No draft or copy of this proclamation is now found in the *Washington Papers*.

9. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, February 2, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: I transmit herewith the Copy of a letter dated the 19th of December last, from Governor Blount²¹ to the Secretary of War stating the avowed and daring designs of certain persons to take possession of lands belonging to the Cherokees, and which the United States have by Treaty solemnly guaranteed to that Nation. The injustice of such intrusions, and the mischievous consequences, which must necessarily result therefrom. demand that effectual provision be made to prevent them.²²

Library of Congress

21. William Blount, Governor of the Southwest Territory.

22. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE

United States, February 26, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate: I send herewith the Treaty concluded on the 27th of October last between the United States and Spain³⁹ by their respective Plenipotentiaries.

The Communications to the Senate referred to in my message of the 16th. of December 1793 contain the instructions to the Commissioners of the United States, Messrs. Carmichael and Short, and various details relative to the negociations with Spain. Herewith I transmit Copies of the documents authorizing Mr. Pinckney the Envoy extraordinary from the United States to the Court of Spain, to conclude the negociation, agreeably to the original instructions above mentioned; and to adjust the Claims of the United States for the Spoliations committed by the Armed Vessels of his Catholic Majesty on the Commerce of our Citizens.

The numerous papers exhibiting the progress of the negociation under the conduct of Mr. Pinckney, being in the French and Spanish languages,

39. This treaty of Friendship, Limits, and Navigation was ratified by the United States, Mar. 7, 1796, and proclaimed Aug. 2, 1796.

will be communicated to the Senate as soon as the translations which appear necessary shall be completed.⁴⁰

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, March 1, 1796.

Library of Congress

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: The Treaty of Amity Commerce

40. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

and Navigation concluded between the United States of America and his Britannic Majesty having, been duly ratified, and the ratifications having been exchanged at London on the 28th day of October 1795, I have directed the same to be promulgated;⁴² and herewith transmit a Copy thereof for the information of Congress.⁴³

42. This presidential proclamation proclaiming Jay's Treaty in effect was issued on Feb. 29, 1795. It is in the usual form and recites the entire text of treaty. The original is in the Department of State. No transcript is now found in the *Washington Papers*.

43. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

TO THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, March 15, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: By the 9th Section of the Act entitled "An Act to provide a naval Armament" it is enacted "that if a peace shall take place between the United States

and the Regency of Algiers that no further proceedings be had under this Act."

The peace which is here contemplated having taken place it is incumbent upon the Executive to suspend all orders respecting the budding of the Frigates, procuring materials for them or preparing materials already obtained which may be done without intrenching upon Contracts or agreements made and entered into before this event.

Library of Congress

But inasmuch as the loss which the Publick would incur might be considerable from dissipation of Workmen, from certain works or operations being suddenly dropped or left unfinished, and from the derangement in the whole system, consequent upon an immediate suspension of all proceedings under it, I have therefore thought adviseable before taking such a step to submit the subject to the Senate and House of Representatives that such measures may be adopted in the premises as may best comport with the public Interest.⁶³

63. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On March 16 Washington presented to Mrs. Walter Stewart, Madam de Brehan's miniature portrait (known as the "cameo portrait") of himself, with the following note: "Not for the representation or the value, but because it is the production of a fair Lady, the President takes the liberty of presenting the enclosed with his best regards, to Mrs. Stewart, praying her acceptance of it." The original of this letter is now in the possession of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, March 25, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives: I send herewith, for your information, the translation of a Letter from the Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to the Secretary of State, announcing the Peace made by the Republic with the Kings of Prussia and Spain, the Grand Duke of Tuscany

and the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, and that the Republican Constitution decreed by the National Convention, had been accepted by the People of France, and was in operation. I also send you a Copy of the answer given by my direction to this communication from the

Library of Congress

French Minister⁶⁹ My sentiments therein expressed, I am persuaded will harmonize with yours and with those of all my fellow Citizens.⁷⁰

69. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

70. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, March 29, 1796.

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives: I send herewith a copy of the Treaty of Friendship, Limits and Navigation, concluded on the 27th of October last, between the United States and his Catholic Majesty.⁷² This Treaty has been ratified by me, agreeably to the Constitution: and the ratification has been dispatched for Spain, where it will doubtless be immediately ratified by his Catholic Majesty.

This early communication of the Treaty with Spain has become necessary, because it is stipulated, in the third Article, that Commissioners for running the boundary line between the territory of the United States and the Spanish Colonies of East and West Florida shall meet at the Natchez before the expiration of six Months from the ratification: And as that period will undoubtedly arrive before the next meeting of Congress, the House will see the necessity of making provision, in their present session, for the object here mentioned. It will also be necessary to provide for the expence to be incurred in executing the twenty first Article of the Treaty, to enable our fellow citizens to obtain, with as little delay as possible, Compensation for the losses they have sustained by the capture of their vessels and Cargoes by the Subjects of his Catholic Majesty, during the late War between France and Spain.

Library of Congress

Estimates of the Monies, necessary to be provided for the purposes of this and several other Treaties with foreign Nations and the Indian Tribes will be laid before you by the proper Department.⁷²

72. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On March 29 Washington transmitted the Spanish treaty to the Senate in a very brief message covering the substance of this letter to the House. This message is also entered in the "Letter Book."

To THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, March 30, 1796.

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives: With the utmost attention I have considered your resolution of the 24th. instant, requesting me to lay before your House, a copy of the instructions to the Minister of the United States who negotiated the Treaty with the King of Great Britain, together with the correspondence and other documents relative to that Treaty, excepting such of the said papers as any existing negotiation may render improper to be disclosed.

In deliberating upon this subject, it was impossible for me to lose sight of the principle which some have avowed in its discussion; or to avoid extending my views to the consequences which must flow from the admission of that principle.

I trust that no part of my conduct has ever indicated a disposition to withhold any information which the Constitution has enjoined upon the President as a duty to give, or which could be required of him by either House of Congress as a right; And with truth I affirm, that it has been, as it will continue to be, while I have the honor to preside in the Government, my constant endeavour to harmonize with the other branches thereof; so

Library of Congress

far as the trust delegated to me by the People of the United States, and my sense of the obligation it imposes to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution” will permit.

The nature of foreign negotiations requires caution; and their success must often depend on secrecy: and even when brought to a conclusion, a full disclosure of all the measures, demands, or eventual concessions, which may have been proposed or contemplated, would be extremely impolitic: for this might have a pernicious influence on future negotiations; or produce immediate inconveniences, perhaps danger and mischief, in relation to other powers. The necessity of such caution and secrecy was one cogent reason for vesting the power of making Treaties in the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, the principle on which that body was formed confining it to a small number of Members.

To admit then a right in the House of Representatives to demand, and to have as a matter of course, all the Papers respecting a negotiation with a foreign power, would be to establish a dangerous precedent.

It does not occur that the inspection of the papers asked for, be relative to any purpose under the cognizance of the House of Representatives, except that of an impeachment, which the resolution has not expressed. I repeat, that I have no disposition to withhold any information which the duty of my station will permit, or the public good shall require to be disclosed: and in fact, all the Papers affecting the negotiation with Great Britain were laid before the Senate, when the Treaty itself was communicated for their consideration and advice.

The course which the debate has taken, on the resolution of the House, leads to some observations on the mode of making treaties under the Constitution of the United States.

Having been a member of the General Convention, and knowing the principles on which the Constitution was formed, I have ever entertained but one opinion on this subject; and from the first establishment of the Government to this moment, my conduct has

Library of Congress

exemplified that opinion, that the power of making treaties is exclusively vested in the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur, and that every treaty so made, and promulgated, thenceforward

became the Law of the land. It is thus that the treaty making power has been understood by foreign Nations: and in all the treaties made with them, *we* have declared, and *they* have believed, that when ratified by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, they became obligatory. In this construction of the Constitution every House of Representatives has heretofore acquiesced; and until the present time, not a doubt or suspicion has appeared to my knowledge that this construction was not the true one. Nay, they have more than acquiesced: for till now, without controverting the obligation of such treaties, they have made all the requisite provisions for carrying them into effect.

There is also reason to believe that this construction agrees with the opinions entertained by the State Conventions, when they were deliberating on the Constitution; especially by those who objected to it, because there was not required, in *commercial treaties*, the consent of two thirds of the whole number of the members of the Senate, instead of two thirds of the Senators present; and because in treaties respecting territorial and certain other rights and claims, the concurrence of three fourths of the whole number of the members of both houses respectively, was not made necessary.

It is a fact declared by the General Convention, and universally understood, that the Constitution of the United States was the result of a spirit of amity and mutual concession. And it is well known that under this influence the smaller States were admitted to an

equal representation in the Senate with the larger States; and that this branch of the government was invested with great powers: for on the equal participation of those powers, the sovereignty and political safety of the smaller States were deemed essentially to depend.

Library of Congress

If other proofs than these, and the plain letter of the Constitution itself, be necessary to ascertain the point under consideration, they may be found in the journals of the General Convention, which I have deposited in the office of the department of State. In these journals it will appear that a proposition was made, “that no Treaty should be binding on the United States which was not ratified by a Law”; and that the proposition was explicitly rejected.

As therefore it is perfectly clear to my understanding, that the assent of the House of Representatives is not necessary to the validity of a treaty: as the treaty with Great Britain exhibits in itself all the objects requiring legislative provision; And on these the papers called for can throw no light: And as it is essential to the due administration of the government, that the boundaries fixed by the constitution between the different departments should be preserved: A just regard to the Constitution and to the duty of my Office, under all the circumstances of this case, forbids a compliance with your request.⁴

4. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*. A comparison of Pickering's draft of the message in the *Washington Papers*, shows a few alterations by Charles Lee.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, April 8, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives: By an Act of Congress passed in the 26th of May 1790 it was declared that the Inhabitants of the territory of the United States south of the river Ohio, should enjoy all the privileges, benefits and advantages set forth in the ordinance of Congress for the government of the territory of the United States northWest of the river Ohio; and that the government of the said territory south of the Ohio should be similar to that which was then exercised in the territory North-West of the Ohio;

Library of Congress

except so far as was otherwise provided in the conditions expressed in an Act of Congress passed the 2d. of April 1790, entitled "An Act to accept a cession of the claims of the State of North Carolina to a certain district of Western territory."

Among the privileges, benefits and advantages thus secured to the Inhabitants of the territory south of the Ohio, appear to be the right of forming a permanent Constitution and State Government and of admission as a State, by its delegates, into the Congress of the United States on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever, when it should have therein Sixty thousand free inhabitants: provided the Constitution and Government so to be formed should be Republican, and in conformity to the principles contained in the Articles of the said Ordinance.

As proofs of the several requisites to entitle this territory south of the River Ohio to be admitted, as a State into the Union,²² Governor Blount has transmitted a return of the enumeration of its Inhabitants, and a printed copy of the Constitution and form of Government on which they have agreed, which with his Letters accompanying the same, are herewith laid before Congress. ²³

22. Tennessee was admitted to the Union June 1, 1796.

23. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE

United States, May 5, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate: I lay before you, for your consideration and advice, an explanatory Article proposed to be added to the Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation between the United States and Great Britain; together with a copy of the full power to the Secretary of State to negotiate the same.⁴⁵

45. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, May 25, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives: The measures, now in operation for taking possession of the posts of Detroit and Michilimackinac, render it proper, that provision should be made for extending to these places and any others alike circumstanced, the civil authority of the north western territory. To do this will require an expence, to defray which the ordinary salaries of the Governor and Secretary of that territory appear to be incompetent. The forming of a new County or new Counties and the appointment of the various Officers, which the

just exercise of Government must require, will oblige the Governor and Secretary to visit those places and to spend considerable time in making the arrangements necessary for introducing and establishing the Government of the United States. Congress will consider what provision will in this case be proper.⁷⁸

78. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, May 28, 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives: The extraordinary expences to be incurred in the present year in supporting our foreign intercourse, I find will require a provision beyond the ordinary appropriation and the additional twenty thousand dollars lately granted.

Library of Congress

I have directed an estimate to be made,⁸⁰ which is sent herewith and will exhibit the deficiency for which an appropriation appears to be necessary.⁸¹

80. The estimate is entered in the "Letter Book" immediately following this message.

81. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

EIGHTH ANNUAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS⁶⁴

December 7, 1796.

Fellow Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives:

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers* is the following: "At twelve O'clock, the President attended by the heads of Department and the Attorney General, went to the Chamber of the House of Representatives, where finding both Houses of Congress assembled, he delivered to them the following Speech."

In recurring to the internal situation of our Country, since I had last the pleasure to Address you, I find ample reason for a renewed expression of that gratitude to the ruler of the Universe, which a continued series of prosperity has so often and so justly called forth.

The Acts of the last Session, which required special arrangements, have been, as far as circumstances would admit, carried into operation.

Measures calculated to insure a continuance of the friendship of the Indians, and to preserve peace along the extent of our interior frontier, have been digested and adopted. In the framing of these, care has been taken to guard on the one hand, our advanced Settlements from the predatory incursions of those unruly Individuals, who cannot be restrained by their Tribes; and on the other hand, to protect the rights secured to the

Library of Congress

Indians by Treaty; to draw them nearer to the civilized state; and inspire them with correct conceptions of the Power, as well as justice of the Government.

The meeting of the deputies from the Creek Nation at Colerain, in the State of Georgia, which had for a principal object the purchase of a parcel of their land, by that State, broke up without its being accomplished; the Nation having, previous to their departure, instructed them against making any Sale; the occasion however has been improved, to confirm by a new Treaty with the Creeks, their pre-existing engagements with the United States; and to obtain their consent, to the establishment of Trading Houses and Military Posts within their boundary; by means of which, their friendship, and the general peace, may be more effectually secured.

The period during the late Session, at which the appropriation was passed, for carrying into effect the Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, between the United States and his Britannic Majesty, necessarily procrastinated the reception of the Posts stipulated to be delivered, beyond the date assigned for that event. As soon however as the Governor General of Canada could be addressed with propriety on the subject, arrangements were cordially and promptly concluded for their evacuation; and the United States took possession of the principal of them, comprehending Oswego, Niagara, Detroit, Michelimackina, and Fort Miami; where, such repairs, and additions have been ordered to be made, as appeared indispensable.

The Commissioners appointed on the part of the United States and of Great Britain, to determine which is the river St. Croix, mentioned in the Treaty of peace of 1783, agreed in the choice of Egbert Benson Esqr. of New York, for the third Commissioner. The whole met at St. Andrews, in Passamaquoddy Bay, in the beginning of October; and directed surveys to be made of the Rivers in dispute; but deeming it impracticable to have these Surveys completed before the next Year, they adjourned, to meet at Boston in August 1797, for the final decision of the question.

Library of Congress

Other Commissioners appointed on the part of the United States, agreeably to the seventh Article of the Treaty with Great Britain, relative to captures and condemnations of Vessels and other property, met the Commissioners of his

Britannic Majesty in London, in August last, when John Trumbull, Esqr. was chosen by lot, for the fifth Commissioner. In October following the Board were to proceed to business. As yet there has been no communication of Commissioners on the part of Great Britain, to unite with those who have been appointed on the part of the United States, for carrying into effect the sixth Article of the Treaty.

The Treaty with Spain, required, that the Commissioners for running the boundary line between the territory of the United States, and his Catholic Majesty's Provinces of East and West Florida, should meet at the Natchez, before the expiration of six Months after the exchange of the ratifications, which was effected at Aranjuez on the 25th. day of April; and the troops of his Catholic Majesty occupying any Posts within the limits of the United States, were within the same period to be withdrawn. The Commissioner of the United States therefore, commenced his journey for the Natchez in September; and troops were ordered to occupy the Posts from which the Spanish Garrisons should be withdrawn. Information has been recently received, of the appointment of a Commissioner on the part of his Catholic Majesty for running the boundary line, but none of any appointment, for the adjustment of the claims of our Citizens, whose Vessels were captured by the Armed Vessels of Spain.

In pursuance of the Act of Congress, passed in the last Session, for the protection and relief of American Seamen, Agents were appointed, one to reside in Great Britain, and the other in the West Indies. The effects of the Agency in the West Indies, are not yet fully

ascertained; but those which have been communicated afford grounds to believe, the measure will be beneficial. The Agent destined to reside in Great Britain, declining to accept the appointment, the business has consequently devolved on the Minister of

Library of Congress

the United States in London; and will command his attention, until a new Agent shall be appointed.

After many delays and disappointments, arising out of the European War, the final arrangements for fulfilling the engagements made to the Dey and Regency of Algiers, will, in all present appearance, be crowned with success: but under great, tho' inevitable disadvantages, in the pecuniary transactions, occasioned by that War; which will render a further provision necessary. The actual liberation of all our Citizens who were prisoners in Algiers, while it gratifies every feeling heart, is itself an earnest of a satisfactory termination of the whole negotiation. Measures are in operation for effecting Treaties with the Regencies of Tunis and Tripoli.

To an active external Commerce, the protection of a Naval force is indispensable. This is manifest with regard to Wars in which a State itself is a party. But besides this, it is in our own experience, that the most sincere Neutrality is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of Nations at War. To secure respect to a Neutral Flag, requires a Naval force, organized, and ready to vindicate it, from insult or aggression. This may even prevent the necessity of going to War, by

discouraging belligerent Powers from committing such violations of the rights of the Neutral party, as may first or last, leave no other option. From the best information I have been able to obtain, it would seem as if our trade to the mediterranean, without a protecting force, will always be insecure; and our Citizens exposed to the calamities from which numbers of them have but just been relieved.

These considerations invite the United States, to look to the means, and to set about the gradual creation of a Navy. The increasing progress of their Navigation, promises them, at no distant period, the requisite supply of Seamen; and their means, in other respects, favour the undertaking. It is an encouragement, likewise, that their particular situation, will give weight and influence to a moderate Naval force in their hands. Will it not then be

Library of Congress

adviseable, to begin without delay, to provide, and lay up the materials for the building and equipping of Ships of War; and to proceed in the Work by degrees, in proportion as our resources shall render it practicable without inconvenience; so that a future War of Europe, may not find our Commerce in the same unprotected state, in which it was found by the present.

Congress have repeatedly, and not without success, directed their attention to the encouragement of Manufactures. The object is of too much consequence, not to insure a continuance of their efforts, in every way which shall appear eligible. As a general rule, Manufactures on public account, are inexpedient. But where the state of things in a Country, leaves little hope that certain branches of

Manufacture will, for a great length of time obtain; when these are of a nature essential to the furnishing and equipping of the public force in time of War, are not establishments for procuring them on public account, *to the extent of the ordinary demand for the public service*, recommended by strong considerations of National policy, as an exception to the general rule? Ought our Country to remain in such cases, dependant on foreign supply, precarious, because liable to be interrupted? If the necessary Articles should, in this mode cost more in time of peace, will not the security and independence thence arising, form an ample compensation? Establishments of this sort, commensurate only with the calls of the public service in time of peace, will, in time of War, easily be extended in proportion to the exigencies of the Government; and may even perhaps be made to yield a surplus for the supply of our Citizens at large; so as to mitigate the privations from the interruption of their trade. If adopted, the plan ought to exclude all those branches which are already, or likely soon to be, established in the Country; in order that there may be no danger of interference with pursuits of individual industry.

It will not be doubted, that with reference either to individual, or National Welfare, Agriculture is of primary importance. In proportion as Nations advance in population,

Library of Congress

and other circumstances of maturity, this truth becomes more apparent; and renders the cultivation of the Soil more and more, an object of public patronage.

Institutions for promoting it, grow up, supported by the public purse: and to what object can it be dedicated with greater propriety? Among the means which have been employed to this end, none have been attended with greater success than the establishment of Boards, composed of proper characters, charged with collecting and diffusing information, and enabled by premiums, and small pecuniary aids, to encourage and assist a spirit of discovery and improvement. This species of establishment contributes doubly to the increase of improvement; by stimulating to enterprise and experiment, and by drawing to a common centre, the results everywhere of individual skill and observation; and spreading them thence over the whole Nation. Experience accordingly has shewn, that they are very cheap Instruments, of immense National benefits.

I have heretofore proposed to the consideration of Congress, the expediency of establishing a National University; and also a Military Academy. The desirableness of both these Institutions, has so constantly increased with every new view I have taken of the subject, that I cannot omit the opportunity of once for all, recalling your attention to them.

The Assembly to which I address myself, is too enlightened not to be fully sensible how much a flourishing state of the Arts and Sciences, contributes to National prosperity and reputation. True it is, that our Country, much to its honor, contains many Seminaries of learning highly respectable and useful; but the funds upon which they rest, are too narrow, to command the ablest Professors, in the

different departments of liberal knowledge, for the Institution contemplated, though they would be excellent auxiliaries.

Amongst the motives to such an Institution, the assimilation of the principles, opinions and manners of our Country men, but the common education of a portion of our Youth from every quarter, well deserves attention. The more homogeneous our Citizens can be made

Library of Congress

in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent Union; and a primary object of such a National Institution should be, the education of our Youth in the science of *Government* . In a Republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? and what duty, more pressing on its Legislature, than to patronize a plan for communicating it to those, who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the Country?

The Institution of a Military Academy, is also recommended by cogent reasons. However pacific the general policy of a Nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of Military knowledge for emergencies. The first would impair the energy of its character, and both would hazard its safety, or expose it to greater evils when War could not be avoided. Besides that War, might often, not depend upon its own choice. In proportion, as the observance of pacific maxims, might exempt a Nation from the necessity of practising the rules of the Military Art, ought to be its care in preserving, and transmitting by proper establishments, the knowledge of that Art. Whatever argument may be drawn

from particular examples, superficially viewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince, that the Art of War, is at once comprehensive and complicated; that it demands much previous study; and that the possession of it, in its most improved and perfect state, is always of great moment to the security of a Nation. This, therefore, ought to be a serious care of every Government: and for this purpose, an Academy, where a regular course of Instruction is given, is an obvious expedient, which different Nations have successfully employed.

The compensations to the Officers of the United States, in various instances, and in none more than in respect to the most important stations, appear to call for Legislative revision. The consequences of a defective provision, are of serious import to the Government. If private wealth, is to supply the defect of public retribution, it will greatly contract the sphere within which, the selection of Characters for Office, is to be made, and will proportionally diminish the probability of a choice of Men, able, as well as upright: Besides that it would

Library of Congress

be repugnant to the vital principles of our Government, virtually to exclude from public trusts, talents and virtue, unless accompanied by wealth.

While in our external relations, some serious inconveniences and embarrassments have been overcome, and others lessened, it is with much pain and deep regret I mention, that circumstances of a very unwelcome nature, have lately occurred. Our trade has suffered, and is suffering, extensive injuries

in the West Indies, from the Cruisers, and Agents of the French Republic; and communications have been received from its Minister here, which indicate the danger of a further disturbance of our Commerce, by its authority; and which are, in other respects, far from agreeable.

It has been my constant, sincere, and earnest wish, in conformity with that of our Nation, to maintain cordial harmony, and a perfectly friendly understanding with that Republic. This wish remains unabated; and I shall persevere in the endeavour to fulfil it, to the utmost extent of what shall be consistent with a just, and indispensable regard to the rights and honour of our Country; nor will I easily cease to cherish the expectation, that a spirit of justice, candour and friendship, on the part of the Republic, will eventually ensure success.

In pursuing this course however, I cannot forget what is due to the character of our Government and Nation; or to a full and entire confidence in the good sense, patriotism, selfrespect, and fortitude of my Countrymen.

I reserve for a special Message a more particular communication on this interesting subject.

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives: I have directed an estimate of the Appropriations, necessary for the service of the

Library of Congress

ensuing year, to be submitted from the proper Department; with a view of the public receipts and expenditures, to the latest period to which an account can be prepared.

It is with satisfaction I am able to inform you, that the Revenues of the United States continue in a state of progressive improvement.

A reinforcement of the existing provisions for discharging our public Debt, was mentioned in my Address at the opening of the last Session. Some preliminary steps were taken towards it, the maturing of which will, no doubt, engage your zealous attention during the present. I will only add, that it will afford me, heart felt satisfaction, to concur in such further measures, as will ascertain to our Country the prospect of a speedy extinguishment of the Debt. Posterity may have cause to regret, if, from any motive, intervals of tranquillity are left unimproved for accelerating this valuable end.

Gentlemen of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives: My solicitude to see the Militia of the United States placed on an efficient establishment, has been so often, and so ardently expressed, that I shall but barely recall the subject to your view on the present occasion; at the same time that I shall submit to your enquiry, whether our Harbours are yet sufficiently secured.

The situation in which I now stand, for the last time, in the midst of the Representatives of the People of the United States, naturally

recalls the period when the Administration of the present form of Government commenced; and I cannot omit the occasion, to congratulate you and my Country, on the success of the experiment; nor to repeat my fervent supplications to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and Sovereign Arbiter of Nations, that his Providential care may still be extended to the United States; that the virtue and happiness of the People, may be preserved; and that the Government, which they have instituted, for the protection of their liberties, maybe perpetual. 65

Library of Congress

65. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On December 12 the Senate in a body waited on the President at his house, at noon, when the Vice President "delivered" the address of the Senate in answer to this address. This answer is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

The President replied briefly, and, in response to the Senate's reference to his retirement and his Farewell Address, said: "For the notice you take of my public services, civil and military, and your kind wishes for my personal happiness, I beg you to accept my cordial thanks. Those services, and greater had I possessed the ability to render them, were due to the unanimous calls of my Country; and its approbation is my abundant reward." This reply is also entered in the "Letter Book."

The House of Representatives waited upon the President, at his house, at 2 o'clock p.m., December 15, when the Speaker delivered to the President the reply of the House to the address, to which the President replied at greater length than he did to the Senate. He said, in part:

"To a Citizen whose views were unambitious, who preferred the shade and tranquility] of private life to the splendour and solicitude of elevated stations, and whom the voice of duty and his country could alone have drawn from his chosen retreat, no reward for his public services can be so grateful as public approbation, accompanied by a consciousness that to render those services useful to that Country has been his single aim: and when this approbation is expressed by the Representatives of a free and enlightened Nation, the reward will admit of no addition. Receive, Gentlemen, my sincere and affectionate thanks for this signal testimony that my services have been acceptable and useful to my Country: the strong confidence of my fellow Citizens, while it animated all my actions, ensured their zealous cooperation, which rendered those services successful. The virtue and wisdom of my Successors, joined with the patriotism and intelligence of the Citizens who compose the other Branches of Government, I firmly trust will lead them to the adoption of measures

Library of Congress

which by the beneficence of Providence, will give stability to our System of government, add to its success, and secure to ourselves and to posterity that liberty which is to all of us so dear.” The reply of the House and the rejoinder of the President are entered in the “Letter Book” in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE

United States, January 4, 1797.

Gentlemen of the Senate: I lay before you, for your consideration, a treaty which has been negotiated and concluded on, the twenty ninth day of June last, by Benjamin Hawkins, Andrew Pickens, and George Clymer, Commissioners, on behalf of the United States, with the Creek Indians, together with the Instructions which were given to the said Commissioners and the proceedings at the place of Treaty.

I submit also the proceedings and result of a Treaty held at the City of New York on behalf of the State of New York with certain Nations or Tribes of Indians denominating themselves the Seven Nations of Canada.⁹⁰

90. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, January 19, 1797.

Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives: At the opening of the present Session of Congress I mentioned that some circumstances of an unwelcome nature had lately occurred in relation to France; that our trade has suffered and was suffering extensive injuries in the West Indies from the Cruisers and Agents of the French Republic; and that communications had been received from its Minister here which

Library of Congress

indicated danger of a further disturbance of our commerce by its authority, and that were in other respects far from agreeable:

but that I reserved for a special message a more particular communication on this interesting subject. This communication I now make.

The complaints of the French Minister embraced most of the transactions of our Government in relation to France from an early period of the present War; which therefore it was necessary carefully to review. A collection has been formed of Letters and papers relating to those transactions which I now lay before you, with a letter to Mr. Pinckney, our Minister at Paris, containing an examination of the notes of the French Minister, and such information as I thought might be useful to Mr. Pinckney in any further representations he might find necessary to be made to the French Government. 4 The immediate object of his mission was to make to that Government such explanation of the principles and conduct of our own, as by manifesting our good faith might remove all jealousy and discontent, and maintain that harmony and good understanding with the French Republic which it has been my constant solicitude to preserve. A Government which required only a knowledge of the *truth* to justify its measures, could not but be anxious to have this fully and frankly displayed.⁵

4. The collection of letters and papers submitted to Congress with this message is printed in full in the *Annals of Congress*, 4th Congress, 2d Sess., Appendix, col. 2713 *et seq.*

5. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

United States, February 28, 1797.

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives: Having maturely considered the Bill to alter and amend an Act entitled an Act to ascertain and fix the military establishment of the

Library of Congress

United States which was presented to me on the twenty second day of this Month I now return it to the House of Representatives, in which it originated with my objections.³³ First. If the Bill passes into a law the two Companies of light dragoons will be from that moment legally out of service, though they will afterwards continue actually in service, and for their services during this interval,

33. The veto was considered by the House, March 1, and the vote taken thereon being 55 to 36, the veto was sustained. A new bill was drafted, "exactly the same as the former, except an omission of the parts objected to by the President." It was passed March 1 and approved by the President, March 3.

namely from the time of legal to the time of actual discharge, it will be unlawful to pay them, unless some future provision be made by law. Though they may be discharged at the pleasure of Congress, in justice they ought to receive their pay not only to the time of passing the law, but at least to the time of their actual discharge. Secondly. It will be inconvenient and injurious to the public to dismiss the light Dragoons as soon as notice of the law can be conveyed to them; one of the Companies having been lately destined to a necessary and important service. Thirdly. The Companies of Light Dragoons consist of one hundred and twenty six non commissioned Officers and privates, who are bound to serve as dismounted Dragoons, when ordered so to do; they have received in bounties about two thousand dollars; one of them is completely equipped, and above half of the non commissioned Officers and privates have yet to serve more than one third the term of their enlistment; and besides there will in the course of the year be a considerable deficiency in the complement of infantry intended to be continued. Under these circumstances to discharge the Dragoons does not seem to comport with œconomy. Fourthly. It is generally agreed that some Cavalry either Militia or regular will be necessary and according to the best information I have been able to obtain, it is my opinion, that the latter will be less expensive and more useful than the former, in preserving peace between the frontier settlers, and the Indians and therefore a part of the Military establishment

Library of Congress

should consist of Cavalry.³⁴

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

CIRCULAR TO SENATORS

United States, March 1, 1797.

It appearing to me proper that the Senate of the United States should be convened on Saturday the fourth day of March instant; you are desired to attend in the Chamber of the Senate on that day at Eleven O'Clock in the forenoon, to receive any communications which the President of the United States may then have to lay before you, touching their interests.³⁵

[N.H.H.S.]

35. In the writing of a Senate clerk. From the summons sent to Senator Samuel Livermore, of New Hampshire.

To THE SENATE

United States, March 2, 1797.

Gentlemen of the Senate: Application having been made to me to permit a Treaty to be held with the Seneka Nation of Indians, to effect the purchase of a parcel of their land under a pre-emption right derived from the State of Massachusetts and situated within the State of New York, and it

appearing to me reasonable, that such opportunity should be afforded, provided the negotiation shall be conducted at the expence of the applicant, and at the desire and with the consent of the Indians; always considering these as pre-requisites, I now

Library of Congress

nominate Isaac Smith to be a Commissioner to hold a treaty with the Seneka Nation for the aforesaid purpose. 36

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.